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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: TAIWAN'S WHO BID, CHINA-JAPAN RELATIONS,
CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage April 14-16 on the 2008 presidential elections and other local issues. The latest poll conducted by the pro-status quo "China Times" Sunday showed that former Premier Frank Hsieh leads the four party hopefuls as the favored DPP candidate to run in the 2008 presidential election. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" commented on the U.S. State Department's response to Taiwan's attempt to join the World Health Organization (WHO) as a full member under the name "Taiwan." The article said the State Department's comment has clearly indicated that Taiwan is not a sovereign state, at least not with the national title of a sovereign state, so it cannot possibly apply for membership for the WHO using this name. With regard to Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's recent visit to Japan, a "China Times" column said Japan has shifted its strategy by attaching more importance to Asia than to the United States. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" called Wen's visit a step in the right direction. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," on the other hand, discussed cross-Strait relations. The article said "Thinking that China would prioritize the success of the Olympics over preventing Taiwan's de jure independence comes from a lack of understanding of China's motivation." End summary.

12. Taiwan's WHO Bid

"Taiwan Will Encounter the 'Nightmare of [Colin] Powell Again?'

Washington correspondent Vincent Chang noted in the "United Notes" column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (4/15):

"... The U.S. State Department's response to Taiwan's application for membership in the World Health Organization (WHO) was divided into two parts. First, it reiterated the U.S. policy of not supporting membership for Taiwan in international organizations requiring 'statehood.' Since there are no diplomatic ties between the United States and Taiwan and it does not recognize the Republic of China diplomatically, this policy statement, though depressing, was not totally unexpected. But the United States did not thereby deny the sovereignty status of the ROC. The second part of the State Department's statement, however, came as a surprise, because the State Department criticized that 'Application in the name of Taiwan to become a member of an international organization whose membership is only open to sovereign states appears to be inconsistent with President Chen Shui-bian's commitment on name change.' ...

"Since WHO is an international organization which only 'sovereign states' are allowed to enter, the second part of the State Department statement, if judged from a good perspective, showed that

Washington was 'implying' that the island's current national title is the ROC rather than Taiwan, and that only the 'ROC' is eligible for a sovereignty status. But judged from another perspective, the State Department [statement] is akin to 'indicating clearly' that Taiwan is not a sovereign state, or at least not the national title of a sovereign state. It is therefore impossible [for Taiwan] to apply for membership for WHO using this name. More importantly, such a move has also violated Chen's pledge not to change the national title of the ROC.

"Former Secretary of State Colin Powell once said during a television interview that 'Taiwan is not a sovereign state,' a statement that has aroused grave concerns from Taiwan. The State Department only clarified in private afterwards that it was 'a slip of tongue.' If the Bian administration really intends to apply for

full membership for the WHO and the United Nations under the name 'Taiwan' so as to highlight Taiwan's 'sovereignty,' it should simply go ahead and build Taiwan into an independent country and win the international community's recognition, so that it is justified in name and in reasoning. Otherwise, it will be constantly criticized by Washington as failing to keep its pledge.... Wouldn't it be afraid that Washington will repeat Powell's statement clearly and let Taiwan experience the nightmare again?"

13. China-Japan Relations

A) "Has Japan Started to Value Asia More Than the United States?"

The "International Outlook" column in the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (4/15):

"Wen Jiabao's visit to Japan has suddenly made the world realize that China-Japan relations are indeed changing; both sides no longer focus on what is happening now and instead have integrated their long-term interests into foreign relations. The change on Japan's side can be traced back to a long time ago. Tokyo first weighed its

interests if it chose to stand by the United States. It was, of course, essential to stand by the U.S. side during the Cold War era, but after that, neither Russia nor China will be able to threaten Japan in the foreseeable future, so basically there is no need to rely on the United States militarily. ...

"Shinzo Abe has figured this out and understood the pathetic [nature] of becoming the United States' 'retinue,' so he would rather choose to alienate the United States and to befriend Asia. This way Japan will not be isolated from the abundant economic interests of this region. ... The reason [behind this] is actually quite simple. The more popular and influential Japan gets in Asia, the more the United States will value it. The more Japan is cold-shouldered in Asia, the less importance Washington will attach to it. As a matter of fact, in terms of geopolitical strategy in Asia, it is the United States that needs Japan, not vice versa.

"As for China's part, it is very practical. Beijing forced Japan to turn its head using a cold gesture, but as long as Tokyo intends to value Asia more than the United States, China's attitude will change completely. For China, it is strategically essential to befriend Japan proactively, and Beijing's sudden change of attitude also came as a pleasant surprise for Japan."

B) "A Step in the right Direction"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (4/14):

"It goes without saying that mainland Chinese prime minister Wen Jiabao's visit to Japan this week is historic, taking place at a time when Sino-Japanese relations have been frosty for too long. The soft-spoken Chinese leader rightly calls his journey to Japan an 'ice melting' visit. While it remains to be seen whether the trip will thaw the ice, it is at least a step in the right direction. ... Wen's three-day visit to Japan should be regarded as a calculated success, judging from his reception in Japan and his appeal to improving relations through friendship and cooperation. The visit could not have come at a better time, when both Tokyo and Beijing feel the need to thaw their relationship. A protracted freeze of

political relations is apparently not in the interests of either side, as their economics have become interdependent. Mainland China has overtaken the United States to become Japan's largest trading partner in 2006, with bilateral trade totaling US\$200 billion. Japan's investment in China since 1978 has exceeded US\$56 billion.

...

"Now, with the joint statement issued after the Wen-Abe summit, the political temperature between Beijing and Tokyo is sure to rise, slowly at least. To be sure, there was no breakthrough on key issues such as the Yasukuni visit, but a lot of goodwill was shown by both sides as their leaders pledged to rebuild ties. ..."

14. Cross-Strait Relations

"The Olympics Won't Protect Taiwan"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (4/15):

"... It goes without saying that a successful, incident-free Olympics in Beijing is a top priority for the Chinese government. However, it would be naive to assume that Beijing would even consider adjusting its policy toward Taiwan -- even temporarily -- to improve its image ahead of the games. ... In light of this, some political analysts have suggested that the period immediately preceding the 2008 Olympics would be ideal timing for Taiwan to declare de jure independence. They argue that Beijing would not dare to invade Taiwan then because such an act would incur the anger of the international community and jeopardize the success of their dream of wooing the world in Beijing next year. It would seem this thought has crossed others' minds as well. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice last week cautioned Taiwan not to take advantage of the Beijing Olympics to declare formal independence. ..."

"Regardless, the idea that China would turn a blind eye to de jure independence is too optimistic. That Taiwan should be a province of China is just as important to China as wooing the international community. Moreover, Taiwan is important to China for the very same reason that the Olympics are important to it -- nationalism, a vivid image of a Great China in days gone by. ... Thinking that China would prioritize the success of the Olympics over preventing Taiwan's de jure independence comes from a lack of understanding of China's motivation."

YOUNG